

Comrades in Dead Valley

By CHARLES E. BAXTER

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Mike Maloney had traversed many wild places during his sixty years of life, but Dead Valley seemed likely to be the last of them.

For five days he had set his face steadily westward over the burning, barren alkali lands, toward the mythical mine, in spite of warnings that no man had ever crossed Dead Valley from end to end. And now Mike saw his own end approaching.

He had trusted to luck and to his own dogged will power. The will burned as unquenchably as ever, but the luck was out—dead-out. It was twenty-four hours since he had tasted water.

Twenty-four hours under a Dead Valley sun! If he could go on twenty-four hours longer, he could reach safety. But the blood in his veins had turned to slurr and cinders, and he had staggered to the thin shade of a cactus and fallen there.

"I guess this is all, Bill," he said. The great wolfhound stood beside him, panting, its tongue hanging from its mouth. In its appealing eyes old Mike, too, read the presentiment of death.

Mike stretched out his hand. "We been good friends these four or five years, Bill," he said. "It's kinder hard."

Suddenly a thought flashed through his mind that made him wince with shame and humiliation. But it returned unbidden.

As if sensing it, the great hound leaped back with a whine and laid its ears forward.

Old Mike had one bullet left in his revolver. He had planned that for himself, in case he failed to win out in his fight with Dead Valley. Now another use for it had occurred to him.

After all, if death for both was certain, was it not more merciful to end the hound's sufferings quickly—and to restore his own life by the sacrifice of the animal's?

In lonely places thoughts become almost as things. As Old Mike drew the loaded revolver from its holster and called the animal, Bill snarled and began running in circles round and round him, just out of revolver range.

He might suddenly have gone mad, for he was snapping and snarling, and showing a marked inclination to dash in upon his master.

"He's gone mad," thought Mike. "That fixes that." He drew aim and fired.

A few hairs flew from the hound's tail. Mike Maloney had missed. And, like an arrow, Bill darted at his throat.

Mike was just in time to spring to his feet and greet the animal with a vicious kick that hurled it, snarling and whimpering, a dozen feet away.

And then Mike knew that the same awful thought that had come to him had come to the dog too. And like primitive man he had to face his canine foe unarmed, trusting in his wits against its superior speed and the grip of its fangs.

Hours must have gone by, while the two circled about each other, watching each other. Mike still had his jackknife. If it came to close quarters he felt confident that he could plunge through the shaggy hide into the heart—provided his strength held out. But already the first coma of unconsciousness was overcoming him, and the brilliant alkali desert swam before his eyes.

The dog seemed to have become a pack of six, ever circling round and round him, sometimes uttering a feeble yelp from the parched throat, out of which the tongue, swollen to a frightful size, protruded.

Mike lay down at last, his jackknife in his hand, waiting. Slowly the hound came nearer. Its bloodshot eyes gleamed wickedly. It showed an almost human cunning in the way it approached, fawning, whimpering—

Mike thrust. He missed. The hound leaped back with a yelp. But it had been almost too cunning for him. Mike had been half unconscious without knowing it. Another instant and those fangs would have been in his throat.

The hound was lying in the distance, panting, looking at him. Mike stole cautiously toward it. He must make an end before unconsciousness supervened. Then he would be refreshed, to take up his terrible journey. He walked with hand outstretched.

"Good ole Bill!" he said thickly.

The animal watched him; then, seeing the knife, it suddenly turned tail and disappeared into the distance.

And Mike fell prone and unconscious upon the alkali.

Water!

It was trickling into his throat, the sweetest drink that he had known in all his life. Mike opened his eyes. A tent was over him. And beside him stood Jim Lavery, his old partner.

"Lie still, ye durned old fool. Ye'll be all right now," said Jim.

"You—where am I?"

"Right in the middle of Dead Valley. We got up a search party out in Larrabee. Gussed we'd find you purty nigh finished. But we'd never have found you, if that hound of yours hadn't found us."

A soft tongue caressed Mike's hand. Mike looked into the faithful eyes of the watcher at his side and understood.

Roman Emperors Bulled Well. The aqueduct of Appius Claudius Caecus dates from 312 B. C.

NOT AS SHE HAD PICTURED

Girl Who Had Herself Paged in Hotel Unprepared for Meeting With Flippant Individual.

The girl had never been paged in a hotel. Time after time she had heard the bellboys go by calling out names, and always she had envied the young women who got up and followed them to the telephone.

It got to be a positive mania with her—this desire to be paged—and finally she persuaded one of her friends to telephone her at a hotel at a specified time.

She waited in the lobby, sitting on the edge of her seat in excitement, until the boy appeared.

"Miss Brown! Miss Brown!"

She rose excitedly. "I am Miss Brown," she said.

"Gentleman waiting to see you out front."

She looked rather surprised; that had not been in the scheme. But perhaps he had changed his mind. She followed the boy obediently, and was led face to face with a perfect stranger.

Her face grew pink with confusion as she gazed at him, and he, realizing the mistake, watched her in amusement. He was a rather loudly dressed young man with a great air of assurance.

For a moment they stared; then he spoke.

"Not so good," he said slowly, and then, as an after thought, "but not so bad, either!"

And the girl fled in embarrassment.

OFFER MARK TWAIN REFUSED

Nothing Sadder, He Is Reported to Have Said, Than Editorship of Humorous Periodical.

About that time my wife helped me put another temptation behind me. This was an offer of sixteen thousand dollars a year, for five years, to let my name be used as editor of a humorous periodical.

I praise her for furnishing her help in resisting that temptation, for it is her due. There was no temptation about it, in fact, but she would have offered her help just the same if there had been one. I can conceive of many wild and extravagant things when my imagination is in good repair, but I can conceive of nothing quite so wild and extravagant as the idea of my accepting the editorship of a humorous periodical.

I should regard that as the saddest of all occupations. If I should undertake it I should have to add to the occupation of undertaker, to relieve it in some degree of its cheerlessness. —From "Unpublished Chapters from the Autobiography of Mark Twain" in Harper's Magazine.

Where Long Necks Are Stylish.

In Burma, among the Karens, a long neck is the ambition of every woman. Her mother starts thinking about this when her daughter is a baby, and starts to accomplish this swan-like effect when the tots are scarcely able to walk.

The method employed is a series of heavy brass rings, which are as thick as your little finger. These are put around the child's neck, and as she grows, more rings are added, thus forcing her neck to lengthen out. More rings are added year after year as the girl grows into womanhood. Twenty-one of these collars is the average worn, although 25 have been achieved.

The 21-ring-collared woman is thought beautiful, but the 25-ringed lady is considered a raving beauty under the Karens of Burma.

Hidden Brine River.

A thousand feet beneath the town of Midland, Mich., run rivers of brine charged with calcium, sodium, magnesium, strontium, bromine and chlorine. Forty pumping wells raise the brine, and separative processes release from it the bases of photographic emulsions, medicines, cement, tanning materials, perfumes, preservatives and cold-storage solutions. The magnesium was used for war flares, and now, combined in a secret alloy, furnishes metal one-third the weight of aluminum, sustaining a pressure of 24,000 pounds per square inch. In the form of gas-engine pistons, after a test equivalent to that of a motor car running 30 miles an hour continuously for 35,000 miles scarcely a sign of wear was discernible. —Scientific American.

Of Course Not!

A negro boarded a tramcar. After a word with the conductor, he shuffled toward the door again.

An inspector, who happened to be in the car, said to him, "surely you don't want to get off so soon—and you haven't paid."

"Ah want ter go ter Whopple street," said the negro, "an' de conductah says dah's no sich place."

"Well, there isn't," said the conductor.

"Den dah's sure no good in ma gwine dah."—Edinburgh Scotsman.

Baffin Land.

Baffin Land, a barren insular tract in British North America, lies between latitude 61 degrees and 72 degrees north, with Lancaster sound on the north, Baffin bay and Davis strait on the east, the Gulf of Bothnia and Fox channel on the west, and Hudson bay on the south. The area is about 236,000 square miles. It is inhabited by a few Eskimos, but is visited occasionally by whalers.

RAISE BUGS TO FIGHT BUGS

French Scientists Breed Insects and Birds That Are Enemies of Fruit-Destroying Pests.

There is a quaint institution in Mentone, in the south of France, known as the Insectarium, where learned professors are rearing various species of bugs and other insects.

Mentone is in the center of an important fruit-growing district, and the object is to discover the best means of fighting those insect pests that prey upon plants and ruin the fruit.

The orchards have suffered severely through the ravages of the mealy bug, and the fruit growers were becoming quite alarmed. Then experts discovered that three other species of bug are the natural enemies of the mealy. So these are being bred and reared and turned loose in the orchards as allies of the fruit growers.

The institution is also breeding certain species of ladybirds to destroy the cochineal, an insect that plays havoc with orange and lemon trees. These ladybirds have been brought from far Australia and California.

The institution is nothing less than an up-to-date insect farm, consisting of a large private house and an acre of ground. In the laboratory are rows upon rows of phials and jars, the larvae of various insects which are kept at a high temperature. In the garden are cages full of all kinds of creeping and flying pests.

VAST WEALTH FROM SILVER

Fortunate Spaniards Spent Millions as the Average Man Might Dispend His Dollars.

In the old Spanish days in Mexico, millionaires were often made overnight in the rich silver-mining sections around Guadalajara. A shrewd prospector in the early days, named Zambrano, discovered a mine which brought him immense wealth. He spent most of his time in the capitals of Europe, living as extravagantly as possible, squandering vast sums at the gaming table, but managing to leave a snug little fortune of \$60,000,000. One of his whims was to lay a silver pavement in front of his house, but this the authorities forbade. In those days silver was on a par with gold.

The conde de Valenciana, who discovered one of the richest mines in this section, derived so much wealth from it that he is said to have gotten rid of \$100,000,000 in a few years. Another silver king sent the king of Spain \$2,000,000 as a Christmas present, and asked to be allowed to build galleries and portals of silver around his mansion. This request was refused, the authorities declaring that such magnificence was the privilege of royalty only.

Making Burglar's Tools.

The "Black museum" at Scotland Yard has recently acquired a fine set of house-breaking tools which had been abandoned by their owner after a burglary. These instruments show wonderful workmanship. There is a collapsible jimmy that folds up in the pocket, a rope ladder of silk that fits into the palm of the hand, a number of keys and lock-picking instruments, and a neat oxygen-acetylene blow-lamp. Where do burglars obtain these marvelous tools? They are experts at making skeleton keys and so on, but they are not capable of making the other implements. No respectable firm manufactures such articles, and, although a small quantity is made secretly by employees of reputable firms, the majority come from special factories engaged in nothing else but making burglars' tools. Such factories are hidden away in back streets, and it is almost impossible to locate them.

Carib's Flashing Thunder Bird.

The Australian thick-headed shrike is about six inches long, rich-yellow below, with a jet-black collar and a white throat, black head and partly black tail. It is sometimes called the black-breasted fly-catcher and it has also a variety of French and New Latin names.

In the mythology of some low tribes, such as the Caribs, Brazilians, Harvey Islanders, Karens, Bechunas and Basutos, there are legends of a flapping or flashing thunder bird, which seems to translate into myth the thought of thunder and lightning descending from the upper regions of the air, the home of the eagle and the vulture.

Simple Life in India.

In some parts of India, I discovered, clothes—or the lack of them—cause little concern; children up to six or eight years old wear absolutely nothing. All the barbering is done, in the open street.

For the most part, houses are simply built of clay, with brush thrown over the top. The better classes of natives pile into tenement houses as people do in the congested districts of New York City, and their ambition seems to be to crowd as many persons into a room as possible, and to have as many children as nature will permit. —World Traveler.

Love of Nature.

"What is your favorite flower?" "Well," replied Farmer Cornstossel, "I guess an orchid is about as satisfactory as any." "Orchids are beautiful, but rare." "That's why I favor 'em. There's no chance of their gettin' a start like daisies or dandelions an' havin' to be weeded out."—Washington Star.

Paladins of South Carolina: John Hampden Brooks.

Capt. "Ham" Brooks, as he was known throughout the length and breadth of the up country, although he became lieutenant colonel during the Confederate war, was born at Edgefield, educated at Cokesbury, Mount Zion institute, Winnsboro, and the South Carolina college, class of 1854.

His grandmother was a Butler, his grandfather, Zachariah Brooks, served with distinction in the Revolution and his father, Col. Whitefield Brooks, one of the most prominent men of his day and time in the up country. The Butlers and the Brooks were Whigs on whom the war laid heavy toll. Many were killed, some being massacred at Cloud's creek.

Owing to the ill health of his father, Col. Whitefield Brooks, the management of the plantation fell on his wife, a woman of discernment, shrewd business tact and of large sympathies. Traditions of her linger yet in the community more than 50 years after her death. Capt. "Ham" Brooks always told me that he owed everything to his mother's training.

"Roselands," eight or nine miles below old Ninety Six, was one of the large estates of the up country. Even so late as 40 years ago it had retained features of colonial times. The large plantation house faced a flower garden, once tenderly cared for and exquisitely kept. The road wound by the dwelling in a crescent, turning from the highway. From end to end it was shaded by oaks. One could "hear through their umbrage ancestral the wind prophesy as of yore." In open spaces Bermuda and blue grass grew; back of the grove of big trees behind the house, the land fell away to a spring, pure and sweet, whose flow was carried off in a branch into the wilds of Half Way swamp. To the southwest another branch issued from a hillside, coursing over rocks and through gravelly soil toward what was known as "the territory," where it joined Ninety Six creek. To the northwest rose from the crown of a hill a patch of stately pines, visible ten or twelve miles away in that region of hills and marking the site of "Roselands" as a lighthouse marks port.

The upper and lower verandas were festooned with vines. In season the whole place was glorified with roses, but many flowers blew there down to the "primrose and the violet and earliest roses blown."

The grove was always alive with squirrels, many albinos among them, for Captain Ham followed the example set by his wise mother and was a conservator. The family chapel was just off the highway, to the right as you went toward Edgefield.

These things are after all, merely by the way. When you stopped in front of the door, a negro took your horse and the host greeted you. From the moment of arrival you were one with the family. There was neither shade nor shadow of turning in your welcome. The wide hall had the drawing room on the right, its walls ornamented with ancestral portraits, and the dining room on the left, where the wide sideboard knew and did its duty.

Over it all presided Mrs. Brooks, whose charm greeted you and grew steadily; for each day and hour revealed some phase, new and unexpected, in her gifted character. A lovely woman, a lovable woman, with a dignity never ruffled, and a grace equal to exacting demands at home and abroad. Her influence was visible. It represented not only law, but the force behind law, love. It was just as unthinkable that any man, woman or child should transgress her gracious demands, as would be the attempt to extinguish the sunlight. Rarely endowed by nature and moving all her youth in the highest circles of South Carolina society—she was a daughter of Gov. James H. Adams—she had been educated at the famous Barhamville School for Girls, just outside Columbia, and later in Paris.

The Adams home below Columbia, "Live Oak," was a rendezvous before the war for wit, beauty and fashion.

Beautiful women are not uncommon in the world, nor are women of intellect and culture. At least they were not in days of yore.

To beauty, grace, charm, breeding and culture Mrs. Brooke added an individuality, defying analysis, yet as palpable and invigorating as sunshine.

The lot of a cultured woman, accustomed to society, who was shut off by force of circumstances in the depth of the country, with no near congenial neighbors and in sadly reduced circumstances after the war, was a particularly trying one. In addition, there was the care of a large family.

How grandly she rose to meet it and how superbly she was mistress of

the situation was a continual delight to me, and to every one permitted within the sacred precincts of "Roselands."

When such women cease to exist, there will be nothing worth living for, working for or dying for. Civilization will be in ruins.

On the outbreak of war Captain Brooks organized a company, his mother uniformed the men and he entered the army, making a record of service, distinguished from the beginning unto the end. At General Hagood's suggestion and by permission of General Beauregard, he took a lot of federal prisoners, who wished to change sides and formed them into a command, having been himself commissioned a lieutenant colonel. These men proved to be traitors and formed a plot to murder their officers between Charleston and Savannah, where the surroundings were congenial for dark deeds. While awaiting reinforcements, with a lot of men around, whom he knew were oath bound to murder him, John Hampton Brooks displayed the cool courage in which he abounded. I never have known a man who more acutely realized danger or more thoroughly despised it.

The tense and awful situation, which lasted two hours, was relieved by Lieutenant Colonel Brooks bringing in Georgia volunteers, who disarmed the mutineers, and five of the ring leaders were shot.

At the close of the war Captain Brooks retired to Roselands and was not "a successful planter," as the newspapers said; for it is profanation to lie in the case of so perfect an embodiment of truth and knightly virtue. His health militated against that; moreover, owing to his mother's having always managed the plantation he had no practical experience. However, he was a good manager, careful, prudent, holding the plantation together and providing for his own. What is much better than a successful planter, he was a man impervious to temptation. Reduced in circumstances, suffering for lack of things he craved, he was none the less far above sordid consideration. He never bent a finger nor crooked a knee for financial gain.

As he graced the station wherein he was born, he would have equally graced court or camp anywhere, in the age, for he was compounded of the old heroic virtues which have compelled the admiration of men and the devotion of women since Greek and Trojan battled around the walls of Ilium.

He had served a term in the legislature before the war from Edgefield district. After the war he was elected to the general assembly from Greenwood and later to the senate, and in all relations he was the same plain, unpretentious, high minded man, to whom loyalty and truth outweighed jewels and gold.

There is more to tell than can here be told. My last visit to Roselands

was in late summer. The world was swathed in green, covering red hills; and he shade trees were in glory. After a delightful hour, when leaving, I looked back. Captain Ham and his lovely wife sat side by side on the veranda as I had seen them a generation before. That was my last sight of them, but memory keeps them near and dear. Nowhere in the world of men have I met two examples better fitting Milton's description:

"For contemplation he and valor formed;

For softness she, and sweet attractive grace."

"The strength of the hills is His also," saith the psalmist, and these were His evidences of strength and beauty, set amid the hills for a season, and now withdrawn to Him.

All the material prosperity of the up country may shrivel up and fade like a garment "when the moth frest the fibers." There has recently been an unpleasant reminder of how frail material possessions are and how quickly the vanish.

But men and women, endowed with character, living lives of uprightness, clean of heart and strong of arm for what duty requires, are eternal possessions. They pass; but their influence lives.

As Dr. Alexander McLaren of Liverpool once said: "We know not how far the water of life may percolate from its accustomed channels to refresh the roots of distant trees."

Verily, the up country does not itself know how much it owes to its forbears, "who kept the faith of men and saints, sublime and pure and bright."

No sweeter reminder of a glorious past can be called up than that of John Hampton Brooks and the woman he called wife.—The State.

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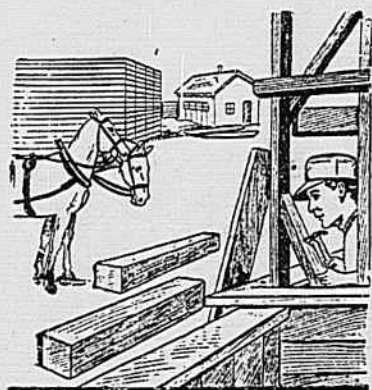
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